



## Export Success Story

### University-Government Partnership Helps Local Small Businesses Export

Contact: Brian Davis, Phone-205-348-7621; [bdavis@aitc.ua.edu](mailto:bdavis@aitc.ua.edu)  
Alabama International Trade Center (AITC)  
The University of Alabama

#### Japanese Pets Enjoy Southern Cuisine

Tuscaloosa, Alabama - Pets in Japan are eating more Southern style food, thanks to a local, family owned company in Red Bay, Alabama. Mr. Alan Bostick, owner and President of Sunshine Pet Foods, Inc., traveled to a trade show in Japan where he opened up new opportunities for Sunshine's line of pet food products.

A few years ago Sunshine launched a new line of veterinarian style dog food at an economy price. The products, called Nurture and Golden Blend, compete with the best that the large suppliers like Hill Science and Ralston Purina have to offer. In fact, Sunshine prides itself on a healthy product and has its own Pet Nutrition Center, headed by Dr. George Collings, who came to Red Bay from the R & D lab of one the big competitors.

After exhibiting at a trade show in the U.S., the company received a stack of cards and inquiries from potential customers overseas. Sunshine turned to the Alabama International Trade Center, a partnership program between the Small Business Administration and the University of Alabama, for help. The Center provided research and training to help Sunshine respond to the leads and learn about export procedures. One of the Center's employees, Michiko Reed, introduced Sunshine to a distributor of pet food in Japan. Their first year of exports to Japan exceeded \$ 500,000.

Sales in the U.S. and overseas are growing, as evidenced by the company's commitment to exporting. Sunshine has representatives or distributors in Europe and Latin America, too. During a trip to South America, Regina Kennedy, who handles customer relations for export, was delighted to find that appetites for Sunshine's special southern cuisine are also popular with the local pets. Sunshine is well on their way to brightening the cuisine for pets around the world.